

**Testimony regarding
HB 7292 An Act Concerning Social Work Title Protection**

Labor Committee

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Senator Kuchner, Representative Porter, Senator Osten, Representative Hall, ranking members, and esteemed members of the labor committee; thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my testimony regarding bill HB 7292 with you today.

My name is Gabrielle Cyr, I am from Berlin Connecticut and a current graduate student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. Today I am testifying in support of Bill HB 7198, An Act Concerning Social Workers, with the contingency that the language be altered to that which was submitted by the National Association of Social Workers Connecticut Chapter.

As the bill is currently drafted, the title protection over the term social worker will only be applicable to those who are licensed clinical social workers. As a student getting her master's degree in social work with a concentration in Policy, this version of the bill is alarming to me as I would not be covered with my currently attained education as a Bachelor of Social Work or upon graduation with a macro focused degree.

Upon telling anyone I was majoring in social work, the response I received was "well good luck with that" or another array of snide remarks. This response is typical to social workers, frankly I don't feel that many people understand the time and dedication social workers put into their education. Through my social work education, I have studied ethical practice, human behavior, the lifespan, as well as had hard conversations about cultural differences, diversity, and the policies that affect all topics mentioned and more. In my opinion, there is no other educational track that provides the same skill set, knowledge base, and ethical frameworks as social work does. Due to this fact, it is inappropriate for anyone without an education in social work to have the privilege to call themselves a social worker. A case worker, a human service worker, sure, but not a social worker.

In allowing anyone and everyone to use the term social worker we are devaluing the countless hours social workers have put into their education and practice. In my experience to this day, I have spent approximately 1,118 hours in 5 different social work internships and have taken about 31 social work focused courses. This, plus the time spent on out of class assignments, conferences, and other educational opportunities, is why I feel so strongly about title protection for ALL individuals formally educated in social work.

With title protection over social workers, we are not only protecting the extensive and thorough education provided by accredited institutions, but we are also protecting our clients from receiving substandard services from individuals who are wrongfully labeling themselves with an education and training base they do not possess.

Currently across the United States, 36 states have title protection for the job classification of social worker including some of our neighbors such as: Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and New Jersey. Doctors don't feel comfortable allowing nurses to claim their doctors; just as I do not feel comfortable allowing anyone without a social work degree to claim they are one. However, what I do feel comfortable with is allowing all levels of educated social workers to claim they are social workers which is why today I am urging you to support bill HB 7292, An Act Regarding Social Workers with the contingency of the substitution of language provided by the National Association of Social Workers Connecticut Chapter.

Thank you for your time.